Miller to receive honorary degree at AU graduation

Auburn will present an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Mobile attorney and AU Trustee John C.H. “Jack” Miller Jr. at fall graduation on Dec. 17.

Approximately 1,396 new graduates will also receive AU degrees at the 2 p.m. ceremony in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum. These include 1,061 bachelor’s degrees, three education specialist degrees, 266 master’s degrees and 66 doctorates.

Miller was a founder and is chairman of the Mobile-based law firm of Miller, Hamilton, Snider & Odom, L.L.C., which has offices in Mobile, Birmingham, Montgomery, Atlanta, Washington and Miami.

In the early 1970s, Miller served on the staffs of Alabama Congressman Walter Flowers and U.S. Sen. John Sparkman. In 1973, he was appointed assistant to the director of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., and in 1977, he was named deputy to the chairman of the FDIC.

Miller served as chairman of the Alabama Democratic Party from 1998-2001. In Mobile, he served as chairman of the Downtown Redevelopment Commission from 1990-2006, during which time

William Powell of the Department of Music in AU’s College of Liberal Arts will be a guest conductor this week for the 2007 Candlelight Processional at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

The Candlelight Processional occurs each year in the America Gardens Theatre at Epcot beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving and running through Dec. 29. Powell also was guest conductor for the Disney World event in 2006.

This Wednesday through Sunday, Powell will lead a mass choir joined by a 50-piece orchestra and a celebrity narrator to tell the story of Christmas in words and music.

At Auburn, Powell conducts the concert choir, gospel choir and men’s chorus, and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in conducting, choral techniques, choral arranging and distance education courses in music.
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he guided investments of more than $400 million into the downtown area. He also serves as chairman of the Governor’s Special Commission to re-energize the Alabama State Parks.

A member of the AU Board of Trustees since 2000, he is chair of the Academic Affairs Commis- sion, where he has been influential in strengthening admissions and academic standards and led efforts to establish a “learning communities” concept for new student housing.

At the AU ceremony, the College of Business will award 277 degrees, the College of Liberal Arts 263, the College of Engineering 129, the College of Education 87, the College of Nursing Sciences 80, the College of Sciences and Mathematics 78, the College of Architecture, Design and Construction 60, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences 59, the College of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences 16 and the School of Nursing 14.

A live video stream of the graduation ceremony will be available on the Web at www.auburn.edu/graduationlive.

Upcoming Events

Monday, December 17
GRADUATION 2 p.m., Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum

Monday, December 24
SEMESTER BREAK Offices closed through Christmas and New Year’s 2008

Thursday, January 3
OFFICES OPEN AU administrative offices resume normal schedule

Monday, January 7
NEXT AU Report; first edition of spring semester

Tuesday, January 8
FIRST DAY of classes for spring semester

Monday, January 14
AWARDS LUNCHEON Women’s Studies Program, keynote speaker Carrie Baker, author of “Sex, Power, and Politics: Origins of Sexual Harassment Policy in the United States,” 11:45 a.m., AU Hotel

PUBLIC LECTURE “President Lyndon Johnson and the Civil Rights Movement,” David Carter of History Department, author of a forthcoming book on the subject, 3 p.m., Special Collections and Archives Department, Draughon Library

Quality of Life Gov. Bob Riley joined AU representatives in New York last week in awarding the College of Human Sciences’ International Environmental Quality of Life Award to eco-

logically price-setting industry leader Ray And-

erson. Shown with the award, from left, are AU President Jay Gogue, Human Sciences Dean June Henton, Anderson and Riley. Anderson’s Atlanta-based company, Interface Inc., has global influence on environ-

mental practices.

Human Sciences honors industrial leader for environmental practices

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ay Anderson, a Georgia industrial leader who is recognized as a global pioneer for environmentally sustainable business practices, was honored as the 2007 laureate at the 14th annual International Quality of Life Awards at the United Nations in New York last week.

Since founding Atlanta-based Interface, Inc. in LaGrange, Ga., in 1973, Anderson has developed the company into the world’s largest producer of commercial carpet tile. The company has sales operations in more than 100 countries and manufacturing facilities on four continents.

In addition, in 2006 Globecan listed Interface as number one in the world for corporate sustainability. The International Quality of Life Award is given annually by Auburn University’s College of Hu-

man Sciences. Paul Hawken, an environmental writer whose work on behalf of ecology greatly influenced Anderson, presented the award to the writer whose work on behalf of ecology greatly influenced Anderson, presenting the award to the writer whose work on behalf of ecology greatly influenced Anderson, presenting the award to the writer whose work on behalf of ecology greatly influenced Anderson, presenting the award to the writer whose work on behalf of ecology greatly influenced Anderson.

Anderson’s influence on the science and art of restorating the biosphere has been vast, said Hawken. He calls a “spear in the chest epiphany,” which led to a complete rethinking of his company’s approach to the environment.

Thirty years ago Anderson issued a challenge for Interface to become the world’s first restorative enterprise by 2020. Interface is now 45 percent of the way to its target of Mission Zero, the point at which the company will be a fully sustainable operation that takes nothing out of the earth that cannot be recycled or quickly regenerated and that does not harm the biosphere.

Anderson served as co-chair of the President’s Council on Sustainable Development in the 1990s, during the Clinton administration.

“Ray is the world’s premier industrialist in the area of sustainable commerce,” said Human Sci-

cences Dean June Henton. “Because of his vision, passion and leadership, Interfor­
glas has set the standard for corporate social responsibility.”

Honorary degree

Holiday card
Jay and Susie Gogue, AU’s new president and first lady, chose a student design for cards to mail to friends of the family and the university this holiday season. Graphic Design student Blake Hicks won a $1,000 award for this design, titled Festive, Auburn’s First Family. Two other Graphic Design students, Tiffany Jeter and Daniel Strunk, were runners-up and will receive $500 awards for their designs.

National survey rates Auburn ‘exemplary’ for junior faculty

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ter the second year in a row, a Harvard-based educational collaborative rates Auburn University among the best workplaces in America for tenure-track junior faculty.

In a survey of workplace conditions for faculty working toward tenure, the Collaborative on Academ-

ic Careers in Higher Education at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education rated AU as “exemplary” in three categories: tenure practices overall, tenure reasonable-ness and policy effectiveness overall.

This was the second set of survey results released by the educational collaborative. In results reported in December 2006, AU was ranked among the top institutions for junior faculty satisfaction with their institutions in terms of career progress, colleagues and institutional support.

The collaborative, which uses the acronym COACHE, measured factors affecting workplace quality at 78 member institutions with almost 7,000 tenure-track faculty members. The 56 universities and 22 liberal arts colleges were evaluated in sepa-

cate categories.

Member universities include several Ivy League schools, private institutions such as Duke and Stanford and major state universities such as Ohio State and Minnesota, plus universities in the California and North Carolina systems.

Auburn was among 10 universities rated exemplary in terms of policy effectiveness overall. Others earning the rating were Duke, North Dakota State, Ohio State, Stanford, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota and Notre Dame.

Auburn also was among eight universities rated as exemplary for tenure practices overall. Other large institutions earning that rating included North Carolina State, Ohio State and Kansas. Those three institutions, plus the University of Virginia, were among 10 universities in the exemplar category for tenure reasonable-ness, a component of the other categories.

The latest study focused on the satisfaction levels of junior faculty toward workplace issues that are critical to professional advancement.

Junior faculty are instructors or assistant profes-

sors who are on working toward tenure, which means institutions must award within seven years in most cases. Faculty who fail to attain tenure cannot con-

inue teaching at that institution and have to start over at another institution or leave the profession.

The collaborative conducted the survey in 2005 and 2006, analyzed the data over the past year and published the results in the report “Top Academic Workplaces 2005-2007.” The report is available on line at http://gseacademic.harvard.edu/~coache.
Outreach award winner provides AU expertise to citizens, officials

A few years ago, concerned citizens in Uniontown found an ally in an Auburn political science professor in efforts to revive their struggling, once-thriving West Alabama community.

Midway between Selma and Demopolis in the heart of Alabama’s Black Belt, Uniontown had seen its economic base decline over several decades as many of its young people and much of its commerce departed for larger cities. Determined to revitalize their town, community leaders turned early in this decade to University Outreach and the College of Liberal Arts’ Department of Political Science for information and assistance.

AU Political Science Professor Christa Slaton, a nationally recognized authority on public opinion polling and the training of elections officials, made the first of many visits to Uniontown with a Kettering Foundation grant to conduct public forums to aid city leaders in formulating redevelopment plans for the Perry County town. When traditional approaches failed to draw a significant number of the town’s 3,000 residents together, Slaton immersed herself in the community, meeting individuals in local stores, beauty parlors, offices, the library and other sites about town over a period of months.

Slaton found a town trying to move beyond a history of racial, social and economic problems that had left many citizens suspicious of the motives of office-holders, of anyone involved in civic efforts and, often, of each other. Yet, she found that many residents shared a dream of a prosperous, vibrant future for their hometown; they just did not expect anyone to step forward to make the dream possible.

Rather than looking for help from outside, the Auburn professor suggested that those who felt the strongest about their community should join together for small civic improvement projects that could pay quick dividends without requiring much financial investment. A small band of citizens soon joined together to clean up an overgrown, trash-filled lot off U.S. 280, turning it from an eyesore into a public park that became a place of civic pride. Out of that initial action grew a citizens group, Uniontown Cares, that has been a major factor in the town’s revival of hopes as well as economic growth, such as the addition of new businesses and a farmer’s market. The town’s progress is on display online at www.uniontownal.org.

Slaton, who has since been named associate dean for educational affairs in AU’s College of Liberal Arts, says Uniontown’s residents turned things around on their own. Her role, she says, was to help the community draw upon expertise that a land-grant university such as Auburn is supposed to provide to the state’s citizens. “They set goals for themselves and they did it themselves,” she said. “Rather than express anger over the inaction of others, they decided to take action. Once they started, they kept making improvements.”

She added, “It was as much a learning experience for me as to the people of Uniontown. When we go out in a community and work with the people there, we bring back knowledge that we can share with our students, so, in a way, everybody gains.”

In recognition of a range of projects, including the Uniontown effort, that carries the expertise of Auburn faculty throughout the state and beyond, Slaton this fall received AU’s 2007 Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach.

“Dr. Slaton’s work is the epitome of what it is to be engaged in outreach as a faculty member,” said Royrickers Cook, assistant vice president for University Outreach. “Her commitment to sharing her academic expertise to all residents of this state to provide to the state’s citizens. “They set goals for themselves and they did it themselves.”

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In addition to Slaton’s work at Uniontown, Cook cited her ongoing work with the national Election Center training program, a non-profit education organization based in Houston, Texas. For that program, Slaton collaborated with several other political science professors at Auburn to develop more than a dozen certification and re-certification courses. Slaton has administered the program since 2003, and she played a key role in developing the center’s national code of ethics.

Nearly 600 elections officials throughout the United States have graduated from the Election Center program.

“Our goal is help professionalize the field of elections and voter registration,” said Slaton. “We provide the elections officials a way to understand, evaluate and improve the administration of elections.”

Slaton’s involvement with university outreach began long before her arrival at Auburn in 1993. While at the University of Hawaii in the 1980s, she was one of the designers of a method of deliberative public opinion polling and helped establish the first neighborhood justice center in Hawaii. A native of South Carolina, Slaton earned her Ph.D. in political science in 1990 and taught at Georgia Southern University before joining the political science faculty at Auburn three years later.

At Auburn, before joining the dean’s office in the College of Liberal Arts, she served as director of the master of public administration program and director of the elections administration program in the Department of Political Science.